

FEBRUARY 12, 2023

JANUARY

Newsletter



On January 10, the Virginia General Assembly convened in Richmond to begin its 2024 legislative session. Following the November elections, in which all 40 seats in the House of Delegates and the Senate were up for grabs, pro-abortion legislators have once again regained control of the General Assembly. With this victory, the General Assembly has a promising opportunity to enact proactive legislation and to protect sexual and reproductive health, rights, and freedom in the state.

Virginia Reproductive Equity Alliance's (VREA) Repro Advocacy Day

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On January 22, the Latina Institute Virginia Team traveled to Richmond to participate in the VREA's Repro Advocacy Day alongside abortion and reproductive justice advocates, supporters, and allies. In the morning, 52 advocates split up and met with 24 legislative offices to discuss the VREA's policy agenda. Recognizing that reproductive justice encompasses more than just abortion care; the Latina Institute Virginia has been proud to stand behind a number of proactive policies that champion a range of sexual and reproductive healthcare issues--

from contraceptive equity to supporting families experiencing stillbirth, and providing insurance coverage for fertility preservation and IVF. For a full rundown of the 2024 VREA Policy Agenda, check out the Latina Institute Virginia's one-pager and talking points here: [Link](#)



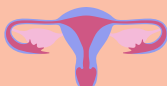
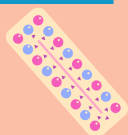
Later that day, advocates sat in on the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee to show support for Senator Ghazala Hashmi's Contraceptive Equity Act (SB238) – a bill that would ensure more people across the state, including Latinas/xs and other communities of color, can access and afford the care they need. After testimony from several members of the VREA, including over very own Field Organizer, Alyssa Aldape, the bill ultimately passed out of committee (8 Yeas; 6 Nays). Since then, the bill has gone on to pass out of the Senate Finance Committee and will soon make its way to the Senate floor for a full vote – stay tuned!

CONNECTING WITH LEGISLATORS

The following day, the State Manager, Khenia Haro-Perez and Policy Advocate, Gabriella Watson, met with legislators to discuss how the Latina Institute Virginia is committed to building power in Latino/x communities and will continue to fight for reproductive freedom and bodily autonomy throughout Virginia.



The Team had the opportunity to meet with Delegate Candi Mudon King, who is the patron of the Contraceptive Equity Act on the House side (HB819). Khenia Haro-Perez (left), Delegate Mundon King (middle), Gabriella Watson (right) after meeting to discuss the Contraceptive Equity Act.



BIRTH IN COLOR (BIC) ADVOCACY DAY

Finally on January 24, the team stayed in Richmond to join Birth in Color for their annual Advocacy Day. This year, BIC has engaged in various legislative measures, including the establishment of a stillbirth support fund, the inclusion of doula care in insurance coverage, and the implementation of unconscious bias training for healthcare professionals. For a full rundown of BIC's advocacy efforts, check out their website here: [Link](#)



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Participating in Advocacy Days and meeting with legislators proved to be a powerful experience, filled with conversations about how our personal stories can destigmatize abortion, drive change, empower communities, and advance proactive policies such as the Contraceptive Equity Act. This session, we've already witnessed progress and attacks on reproductive freedom and bodily autonomy – but as we approach "Crossover" on February 12, marking the midpoint of the legislative session, there's still time to get involved, stay informed, and collectively shape the course of the 2024 General Assembly.



Upcoming Events

Join us for a grounding night, where we will connect back to the root values of Latina Institute.




GET TO KNOW LATINA INSTITUTE

Immigrant Rights

Reproductive Justice

Community Power

Juntas Somos Poderosas



Thursday, February 22



Zoom 7-8pm



At Latina Institute we believe:

Access to affordable, quality healthcare is a human right.



Everyone should have access to the full range of reproductive healthcare, including abortion care, regardless of their income, race, age, disability, gender identity, or im/migration status.



Reproductive healthcare—from before pregnancy through childbirth and postpartum—is crucial for communities to thrive and for people to live with dignity and justice.



All families need access to essential healthcare, not more economic barriers, or obstacles due to their im/migration status. Our elected officials must develop policy solutions that ensure that all of us—including im/migrants—have access to healthcare as we move forward to build a more equitable safety net for all Virginians. Many Virginians, including our Poderosas, are engaged in local mutual-aid networks to ensure our communities get information and access to resources during this pandemic. We are committed to providing care, information, and resources to the entire regional south.

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for Reproductive
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